

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LIBREV 01316 011700Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----038326 011703Z /46

O 011627Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY LIBREVILLE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1113
INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY LOME
AMEMBASSY GANBUI
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMEMBASSY YAOUNDE
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY LISBON
AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L LIBREVILLE 1316

EXDIS

DEPT PASS TO OAU COLLECTIVE
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E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, MOPS, EFIN, EAID, CG, FR, BE
SUBJ: CONSULTATIONS ON RECOVERY EFFORT FOR ZAIRE

REF: STATE 137343

1. INASMUCH AS BONGO HAS BEEN QUOTED HERE PUBLICLY TWICE AS SAYING IN PARIS HE FAVORED CREATION OF FRANCO-PHONE FORCE TO DEAL WITH PROBLEMS SUCH AS SHABA, IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT FOR BONGO NOT TO PARTICIPATE IN SUCH AN UNDERTAKING IF OTHER COULD BE COUNTED IN AS WELL (INDEED, GISCARD MAY HAVE PUT HIM UP TO IT TO ENSURE THAT IDEA WAS FIRST BROACHED PUBLICLY BY AN AFRICAN CHIEF OF STATE).

2. EXTENT OF PARTICIPATION IS SOMETHING OF DIFFERENT MATTER. TOTAL GABONESE MILITARY STRENGTH INCLUDING ARMY, NAVY, AIR FORCE, GENDARMERIE AND PRESIDENTIAL GUARD PROBABLY NOT MORE THAN 4200. OF THESE, PRESIDENTIAL GUARD IS CONSIDERED BEST TRAINED AND EQUIPMENT, BUT BECAUSE OF THEIR PRIMARY FUNCTION, LEAST LIKELY TO BE COMMITTED UNLESS FRENCH HAVE ASSURED BONGO THAT RESIDENT FRENCH TROOPS WOULD ASSURE HIS SECURITY. IN ANY CASE, WHETHER THESE OR OTHER TROOPS WERE COMMITTED, WE WOULD EXPECT GABON'S TROOP PARTICIPATION TO BE AS SMALL AS POSSIBLE, PERHAPS NO MORE THAN 300 MEN AND MORE LIKELY, SOMETHING LESS. (BONGO MIGHT OFFER SOME AIR SUPPORT, I.E., C-130S AND FOUGA MAGISTARS.) BONGO, INCIDENTALLY, DID LIMIT GABONESE PARTICIPATION IN FRANCOPHONE FORCE DURING SECOND PUBLIC STATEMENT TO MATERIAL, BUT WE THINK HE WOULD HAVE HARD TIME SQUIRMING OUT FROM UNDER HIS ORIGINAL STATMENT IF HE WERE ASKED FOR TROOPS, ESPECIALLY IF GISCARD PUT ARM ON HIM. TIENKEN
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NOTE BY OC/T: NOT PASSED

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